ride', coming into common usage, and gangster plays, novels and films proving increasingly popular; for instance, *On the Spot,* a play believed to be based on the great Al Capone himself, which had a long run and provided Mr. Charles Laughton with the first of many successful and lucrative gangster parts. This literature, whose theme was violence and crime, whose style reproduced the rattle of machine-guns, or at any rate of type-writers, and in which there was only action and appetite, owed its popularity to the relief it afforded from the boredom, and desolation of mechanised life. It represented the poetry or mysticism of mass-production, the craving for violence and bloodshed, set up by days spent in exhausting but monotonous activity; unnecessary when, as in the U.S.S.R. and Germany, the same craving is catered for by State organised and publicised terrorism. Its leading purveyor was Edgar Wallace, a genial, rather pathetic figure,[5] frenziedly pouring out words into a dictaphone, frenziedly making and getting rid of money, appear-ing at Blackpool in a yellow Rolls-Royce as a Liberal candidate in the 1931 General Election, and dying exhausted and in debt a year later, having written in all 150 novels, eighteen plays, and innumerable short stories and newspaper articles; of words, many millions.

ii

It was the twilight of post-War enlightenment, almost the end of Mr. High-Mind. Perhaps the verse in the National Anthem about frustrating knavish tricks was [c]un-christian, indecent, dis-

graceful*, and ought to be dropped; perhaps, even, the Elgin Marbles ought to be returned to Greece whence they had been taken. Politicians with military rank mostly preferred to be plain Mr.; Eurasians were Anglo-Indians, boarding-houses, guest-houses, garages, service-stations, and Mr. John Masefield, not Kipling, was made Poet Laureate when Robert Bridges died. Rene Glair's films, *Sous les Toils de Paris, Le Million,* sentimentally

[6] See *Edgar Wallace* by Margaret Lane.